AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as shown below.

1. (Original) Method for drying articles which have been treated (1),

the treated articles (1) being transported along a predefined transport path,

a gaseous drying medium being blown onto the treated articles (1) with a first gas stream from above and with a second gas stream from below,

the first gas stream and the second gas stream being regulated in feed lines to respective gas outlet devices,

characterised in that the treated articles are continuously conveyed in along the transport path for drying and conveyed out after drying,

a temperature of the first and/or second gas stream is detected, and

fan means (16, 17) for generating the first and/or second gas stream are controlled in such a way that the temperature detected is regulated to a predefined value.

2. (Original) Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the first and second gas streams are regulated in such a way that the treated articles are maintained in suspension at the at least one location.

3. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1~~ or claim 2~~, characterised in that for temperature regulation a rotational speed of the fan means is changed by control of the fan means (16, 17).

4. (Currently amended) Method according claim 1,~~ to any one of the preceding claims,~~ characterised in that a thickness of the treated article (1) is detected and in that a direction of either the first gas stream or the second gas stream is reversed if the thickness of the treated article (1) exceeds a predefined thickness.

5. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1,~~ any one of the preceding claims~~, characterised in that the first gas stream and/or the second gas stream are regulated by a pressure regulation.

6. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 5, characterised in that a first pressure associated with the first gas stream and a second pressure associated with

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the second gas stream are detected in the respective feed line from the fan means (16, 17) to the respective gas outlet device for pressure regulation.

7. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1, ~~any one of the preceding claims,~~ characterised in that the treated article is a plate-like article.

8. (Original) Apparatus for drying articles which have been treated (1), comprising

transport means (2, 3) for transporting the treated articles (1) along a predefined transport path,

a first (4) and a second (5) gas outlet device which are arranged above and below the transport path and which each have at least one gas outlet aperture (29) facing towards the transport path, and

fan means (16, 17) for supplying a gaseous drying medium to the first and to the second gas outlet device via a respective first (8) and second (9) feed line,

there being associated with each of the first and second gas outlet devices (4, 5) regulating means (18, 19) in the respective feed line (8, 9) for regulating a gas flow of the gaseous drying medium through the respective gas outlet device (4, 5), and

control means (35) being provided which are so configured that they control the regulating means (18, 19) for regulating the gas flow through the respective gas outlet device (4, 5),

characterised in that the transport means (2, 3) are designated such that they continuously convey the treated articles, (1) along the transport path into the apparatus for drying and out of the apparatus after drying,

at least one temperature sensor (11, 13) is provided for detecting a temperature of the respective gas flow, and

the control means are configured to control the fan means (16, 17) in such a way that the temperature detected by the at least one temperature sensor (11, 13) is regulated to a predefined value.

9. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 8, characterised in that the first and second gas outlet devices (4, 5) include gas guidance elements which are arranged adjacent to the respective at least one gas outlet aperture (29).

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10. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8~~—or claim 9~~, characterised in that the first and second gas outlet devices (4, 5) are in each case configured in the form of a nozzle.

11. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 10, characterised in that the nozzle (4, 5) includes a nozzle plate (28) which extends transversely to the transport path over its full width and is arranged parallel to the transport path, nozzle apertures (29) being provided in the nozzle plate (28) to allow the gaseous drying medium to pass through.

12. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 11, characterised in that the nozzle apertures (29) include elongated slits.

13. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 11~~—or claim 12~~, characterised in that the nozzle apertures (29) include bores arranged in a row transversely to the direction of the transport path.

14. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 11, ~~any one of claims 11-13,~~ characterised in that at least two rows of nozzle apertures (29) are arranged side-by-side in the direction of the transport path.

15. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-14,~~ characterised in that the regulating means (18, 19) include a flap which is arranged in the first (8) or second (9) feed line such that the respective feed line (8, 9) is at least partially closable with the flap.

16. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-15,~~ characterised in that the regulating means (18, 19) include a valve.

17. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-16,~~ characterised in that pressure sensor means (10, 12) are arranged between the respective regulating means (18, 19) and the gas outlet devices (4, 5) for detecting a pressure generated by the respective gas flow, the control means (35) controlling the regulating means (18, 19) in dependence on the pressure detected by the respective pressure sensor means (10, 12).

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18. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-17,~~ characterised in that the transport means include rollers (2, 3) which are arranged above and below the transport path and are driveable to transport the treated articles (1).

19. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 18, characterised in that no rollers (2, 3) are arranged between the first gas outlet device (4) and the second gas outlet device (5).

20. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 18 ~~or claim 19~~, characterised in that the first and second gas outlet devices (4, 5) each have recesses (33) for the rollers (3) in edges arranged transversely to the direction of the transport path.

21. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-20,~~ characterised in that the apparatus includes a closed housing (6) which surrounds the apparatus and has an entry opening (7) for introducing the treated articles (1) and an exit opening (31) for discharging the treated articles (1).

22. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 21, characterised in that an evacuation duct (27) is provided to evacuate the gaseous drying medium from the housing (6).

23. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 22, characterised in that

extraction means (23) are associated with the evacuation duct (27),

further pressure sensor means (24) are arranged in the housing (6) at a distance from the gas outlet devices (4, 5), and

the control means (36) are configured to control the extraction means (23) in such a way that a pressure detected by the further pressure sensor means (24) is maintained at a constant predefined value.

24. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 21, ~~any one of claims 21-23,~~ characterised in that the housing (6) includes a first and second housing part, the transport means (2, 3) and the first (4) and second (5) gas outlet devices being accommodated in the first housing part and the fan means (16, 17) and the regulating means (18, 19) being accommodated in the second housing part (6).

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25. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 24, characterised in that there is provided an intake duct (26) for fresh gaseous drying medium arranged between the first and second housing parts.

26. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-25,~~ characterised in that at least one temperature sensor (11, 13) and at least one gas heating means are arranged in the first (8) or second (9) feed line, and the control means are configured to control the gas heating means in such a way that the temperature detected by the at least one temperature sensor is regulated to a predefined value.

27. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-26,~~ characterised in that the apparatus includes at least two pairs of first (4) and second (5) gas outlet devices.

28. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-27,~~ characterised in that the apparatus is configured for drying plate-like treated articles (1).

29. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-28,~~ characterised in that means (38) for detecting a thickness of the treated articles (1) are provided, and the control means (35) are so configured that they control the fan means (16, 17) to reverse the gas flow either through the first gas outlet device (4) or through the second gas outlet device (5) if the thickness of the treated articles exceeds a predefined thickness.

30. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 29, characterised in that the means for detecting the thickness of the treated articles (1) include sensor means (38) for determining the thickness of the treated articles (1).

31. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 8-30,~~ characterised in that the apparatus is configured for carrying out the method according to claim 1. ~~any one of claims 1 to 7.~~

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